

the appropriation bill as passed by the House and Senate, was increased from \$150 million to \$550 million.

What clearer message could we send to this administration about the importance of the Export Enhancement Program than to increase its funding so significantly. Yet, nothing seems to happen in regard to the use of the Export Enhancement Program for the commodities that many farmers and ranchers care about.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I hope that before we conclude this session, before those of us who are anxious to return home are allowed to return home, and before we can feel good about returning home, we will be able to say that we have taken good care of the stewards of this land, and we have provided the assistance required and necessary of the farmers and ranchers of Kansas and the other States in this country.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the Special Order time of the gentleman from California (Mrs. TAUSCHER).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

CONGRESS SHOULD ADDRESS THE EDUCATION INITIATIVE OF THE PRESIDENT BEFORE ADJOURNING

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, once again today the House was forced to pass a continuing resolution because of the fact that the Republican leadership has not gotten the job done this year in terms of the budget and a number of other issues that we as Democrats feel should be raised or should have been raised, certainly, over the last 2 years, and should have had full debate, but certainly should be addressed in some fashion before we adjourn.

Most important on that list is the education initiative. This is the initiative that President Clinton announced in his State of the Union address last year when he talked about the need on the local level to provide money for school modernization.

The fact of the matter is that across this country there are schools, and in fact, almost every school district has the need to upgrade their school buildings, either because they have to build additional buildings, or because of upgrades necessary just for simple things like computers or new high technology that require new wiring in the school building.

Every school district around the country could benefit in some way from the initiative that President Clinton announced whereby tax credits, in

essence, will be given to the local school districts so they would find it easier to bond to upgrade and modernize their schools.

In addition to that, the President's initiative to hire 100,000 additional teachers in order to reduce class size in the formative years from grades 1 through 3 is another initiative that the Republicans, the Republican leadership, has ignored, has refused to bring to the floor of the House, has really refused to even consider in committee, at hearings, or at markups.

We know, in fact a number of research studies have come out, important ones over the last year, that have indicated very strongly that if we take children at a young age, even younger than grade one, even in preschool, and give them a lot of attention, and manage to have teachers devote the time, if you will, on a regular basis through diminished class sizes, that the result will bear fruit; that we will have smarter children and we will also have a safer atmosphere, because with a smaller class size it is a lot easier, I would say, to manage the children and manage the school.

What we are doing here is trying to, in many ways, model this program to reduce class size and hire 100,000 additional teachers very much on the President's COPS grant program that was passed a few years ago, and that has resulted in many additional policemen being hired in communities around the country, and has actually brought the crime rate down in most of these jurisdictions.

All we are really saying, Mr. Speaker, is that the time has come now, and I know that I do not have to keep repeating over and over again that the Republican leadership basically wasted a lot of time this year refusing to address education, refusing to address HMO reform, refusing to address the need to deal with social security, because we know that the money is not all going to be there in a few years unless we do something.

So we are not going to be able to address all of these issues in the last few days, but at least let us take the opportunity to do something to invest in education, because when I go back to my district, and I was there over the weekend again, back in New Jersey, a lot of the people, a lot of the constituents that I speak to, and certainly educators, say to me that if we do not start a Federal partnership, if the Federal Government does not start to play an increased role in education, then the funding is not going to be there and the opportunities are not going to be there for young Americans in the future. This is our future. This is what is so important for our country.

I just wanted to say, in addition to that, that I have been very disappointed with the fact that we are about to end this session and have not addressed the major health care issue of the day. That is the need for HMO reform.

Some of us last week on the House side, some of the Democrats on the House side, marched over to the Senate on the day when the Senate minority leader, Mr. DASCHLE, tried to bring up the Patients' Bill of Rights. He brought it up and there was a vote. Unfortunately, there was no opportunity. The opportunity to bring it up was defeated on the floor.

But I think it is a shame, because we know, and I am sure every one of us knows, that when we go around the country and when we talk to our constituents, probably the number one issue that they are concerned about is the need for reform of managed care.

So many people have not had operations or procedures that they think are necessary; have been told that they have to leave the hospital sooner than their physician tells them that they should. The fact of the matter is that all the Democrats are really asking for in the Patients' Bill of Rights legislation is a commonsense approach. That should be heeded. That should be heeded by the House Republican leadership.

EXCHANGE OF SPECIAL ORDER TIME

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that I be able to claim the time in Special Orders of the gentleman from California (Mr. RIGGS).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Colorado?

There was no objection.

WHO GETS THE CREDIT FOR THE BUDGET SURPLUS?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. Bob Schaffer) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BOB SCHAFFER of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, last week the Treasury Department announced that the Federal budget is in surplus for the first time since 1969. Only 2 short years ago the President had submitted a budget with \$200 billion deficits as far as the eye can see, as many will recall.

What happened? There are a lot of Americans who do not care much who gets the credit for the current fine state of our economy, and then tend to take the President at his word when he takes the credit for the budget surplus we have at least achieved.

But it is important to understand how we got here so that we may continue on the path of sound economic policy in the future. When the country was faced with large, chronic deficits at the beginning of the 1990s, Congress faced a choice. To cut the deficit, lawmakers essentially had two choices, cut spending or raise taxes.

President Clinton and his liberal allies in Congress naturally chose to raise taxes. Congress at the time was still under the control of the Democrat party, and so President Clinton was